

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3281

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7243

FOL TEL FROM SONGKHLA DATED 23 APR SENT ACTION BANGKOK REPEATED
FOR UR INFO

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SONGKHLA 056

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: THE FALL OF PHNOM PENH AND SOUTH THAILAND

1. THE FALL OF THE CAMBODIAN CAPITAL HAS LOOSENEED
THE TONGUES OF OUR CONTACTS OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS.

2. SONGKHLA'S POLITICAL ASSISTANT REPORTS THAT ONLY
SINCE THE FALL OF PHNOM PENH THAI FRIENDS AND OFFICIALS
HAVE BEGUN TO TALK ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES
IN THAILAND'S FUTURE. THE COMMENTS WE ARE PICKING UP
ARE A REGIONAL REFLECTION OF WHAT BANGKOK HAS ALREADY
HEARD. SOUTHERNERS EXPRESS THE IDEA THAT THE UNITED
STATES IS AN UNDEPENDABLE ALLY: THAT AMERICA WILL TAKE
ITS ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING THE RUG ON THE FLOOR, AND
RETREAT BEHIND THE PACIFIC. DESPITE THEIR CONCERN
FOR THE DRIFT OF EVENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA MANY OF THESE
RESPONDENTS NEVERTHELESS ARGUE THAT THEY ARE STILL
PRO-AMERICAN.

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3. HEAD OF THE PROVINCIAL INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS
COMMAND (ISOC), CAPTAIN MONTHON THANINPATHOMRATH
UNEXPECTEDLY STOPPED AT THE CONSULATE TO DISCUSS
SOUTHEAST ASIA APRIL 22. HE HOPEFULLY SPECULATED
THAT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THAILAND WAS
UNIQUE AND SEPARATE FROM ITS CAMBODIAN POLICY. IF
AMERICA WANTS TO PULL OUT OF AN AREA, SHE SHOULD DO SO
GRADUALLY, GIVING HER ALLIES A CHANCE TO STRENGTHEN
THEMSELVES. MONTHON SAID THAT THAILAND WILL NEED THE
UNITED STATES TO SUPPLY ITS WEAPONS NEEDS; OTHERWISE
THAILAND WILL IMPOVERISH HERSELF TRYING TO BUY WEAPONS
TO MATCH THE ARSENAL HANOI HAS AT ITS COMMAND.

4. COMMENT. WHETHER PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS OR GOVERN-
MENT OFFICIALS, MANY OF THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE HAVE
RECENTLY SPOKEN DISPLAY A SENSE OF DEPENDENCY ON THE
UNITED STATES WHICH IS ALMOST COLONIAL. THEY SEEM NOT
TO HAVE FOCUSED ON CAMBODIA UNTIL PHNOM PENH FELL,
BECAUSE THEY EXPECTED THAT SOMEHOW THE AMERICAN CAVALRY
WOULD SAVE THE SITUATION. THERE IS THUS A SENSE OF
UNCERTAINTY IN SOME SOUTHERN QUARTERS AS TO WHETHER
THAILAND SHOULD EMBRACE THE UNITED STATES MORE TIGHTLY
OR SEEK PROTECTION AMONG THE FOLDS OF THE CHINESE
MANDARIN'S GOWN. REUTHER. UNQUOTE.
MASTERS

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